

BEIJING

ENCOUNTER

DAVID EIMER

Beijing Encounter

Published by **Lonely Planet Publications Pty Ltd**
ABN 36 005 607 983

Australia (Head Office) Locked Bag 1, Footscray,
Vic 3011
☎ 03 8379 8000 fax 03 8379 8111
talk2us@lonelyplanet.com.au
USA 150 Linden St, Oakland, CA 94607
☎ 510 250 6400
toll free 800 275 8555
fax 510 893 8572
info@lonelyplanet.com

UK 2nd fl, 186 City Rd
London EC1V 2NT
☎ 020 7106 2100 fax 020 7106 2101
go@lonelyplanet.co.uk

This edition of *Beijing Encounter* was written by David Eimer. Eilis Quinn wrote the previous edition. This guidebook was commissioned by Lonely Planet's Oakland office and produced by: **Commissioning Editor** Emily K Wolman **Coordinating Editors** Sarah Bailey, Jocelyn Harewood **Coordinating Cartographer** Andras Bogdanovits **Coordinating Layout Designer** Carlos Solarte **Senior Editor** Katie Lynch **Managing Cartographer** David Connolly **Managing Layout Designer** Laura Jane **Assisting Cartographer** Peter Shields **Assisting Layout Designer** Vicki Beale **Cover Research** Dan Baird, lonelyplanetimages.com **Internal Image Research** Sabrina Dalbesio, lonelyplanetimages.com **Language Content Coordinator** Annelies Mertens **Project Manager** Chris Love

Thanks to Lucy Birchley, Daniel Corbett, Sally Darmody, Indra Kilfoyle Yvonne Kirk, Rebecca Lalor, Ji Yuanfang
ISBN 978 1 74179 408 3

Printed through Colorcraft Ltd, Hong Kong.
Printed in China.

Lonely Planet and the Lonely Planet logo are trademarks of Lonely Planet and are registered in the US Patent and Trademark Office and in other countries.

Lonely Planet does not allow its name or logo to be appropriated by commercial establishments, such as retailers, restaurants or hotels. Please let us know of any misuses: lonelyplanet.com/ip.

© Lonely Planet 2010. All rights reserved.



Mixed Sources

Product group from well-managed
forests and other controlled sources
www.fsc.org Cert no. SGS-COC-005002
© 1996 Forest Stewardship Council

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

Colour-Coding & Maps

Colour-coding is used for symbols on maps and in the text that they relate to (eg all eating venues on the maps and in the text are given a green knife and fork symbol). Each neighbourhood also gets its own colour, and this is used down the edge of the page and throughout that neighbourhood section.

Shaded yellow areas on the maps denote areas of interest – for their historical significance, their attractive architecture or their great bars and restaurants. We encourage you to head to these areas and just start exploring!

Prices

Multiple prices listed with reviews (eg Y10/5 or Y10/5/20) indicate adult/child, adult/concession or adult/child/family.

Although the authors and Lonely Planet have taken all reasonable care in preparing this book, we make no warranty about the accuracy or completeness of its content and, to the maximum extent permitted, disclaim all liability arising from its use.

Send us your feedback We love to hear from readers – your comments help make our books better. We read every word you send us, and we always guarantee that your feedback goes straight to the appropriate authors. The most useful submissions are rewarded with a free book. To send us your updates and find out about Lonely Planet events, newsletters and travel news visit our award-winning website: lonelyplanet.com/contact.

Note: We may edit, reproduce and incorporate your comments in Lonely Planet products such as guidebooks, websites and digital products, so let us know if you don't want your comments reproduced or your name acknowledged. For a copy of our privacy policy visit lonelyplanet.com/privacy.

DAVID EIMER

David first came to China in 1988, when both Westerners and cars were in short supply. After studying law, he abandoned the idea of becoming a barrister for a career as a freelance journalist. That took him from London to LA for five years, where he wrote for a variety of newspapers and magazines. Back in London, he returned to China for the first time in 14 years and found a country that had changed beyond almost all recognition. Subsequent visits confirmed his belief that China was the most exciting country in the world, and in early 2005 he moved to Beijing and took up residence in a *hutong* in Dongcheng district and contributes to UK and Hong Kong publications. He has co-authored the last two editions of the *Beijing* guide for Lonely Planet and worked on the *Shanghai* and *China* guidebooks.



DAVID'S THANKS

Special gratitude goes to Li Ying for her invaluable assistance and patience. Thanks to Halla Mohieddeen for her crucial insights and to all the people who passed on tips, whether knowingly or unwittingly. Thanks also to Emily Wolman and David Connolly at Lonely Planet.

Thanks to Eilís Quinn for her work on the previous edition.

THE PHOTOGRAPHER

Greg Elms has contributed to Lonely Planet for over 15 years. Armed with a Bachelor of Arts in Photography, Greg was a photographer's assistant before embarking on a travel odyssey until he eventually settled down to a freelance career in Melbourne.

Our readers Many thanks to the travellers who wrote to us with helpful hints, useful advice and interesting anecdotes: Howard Bull, Bob Saltzstein, Dana Schindel, Brooklyn Storme, Emanuela Tasinato.

Cover photograph A woman on her phone – today's China is a well-blended mix of the traditional and the modern, Peter Beck/Corbis. **Internal photographs** by David Eimer p43, p58, p62, p75, p83, p103. All other photographs by Lonely Planet Images and Greg Elms except those by Jinghui Cai p61; Bob Charlton p69; Krzysztof Dydynski p114; Lee Foster p21; John Hay p4; Richard l'Anson p128; Ray Laskowitz p27, p100, p121; Keren Su p119, p132; Phil Weymouth p30 (top), p135; Lawrie Williams p25; Rodney Zandbergs p130.

All images are copyright of the photographers unless otherwise indicated. Many of the images in this guide are available for licensing from **Lonely Planet Images**: lonelyplanetimages.com



Charming Liulichang (p126) – just the street to browse for antiques

CONTENTS

THE AUTHOR	03	BACKGROUND	135
THIS IS BEIJING	07	DIRECTORY	144
HIGHLIGHTS	08	INDEX	163
BEIJING DIARY	25		
ITINERARIES	29		
DISTRICTS	34		
> DONGCHENG	38		
> NORTH CHAOYANG	52		
> CHONGWEN	66		
> SOUTH CHAOYANG	72		
> XUANWU	80		
> XICHENG	86		
> HAIDIAN	92		
> WUDAOKOU	98		
HISTORICAL			
HOTSPOTS	105		
SNAPSHOTS	114		
> ACCOMMODATION	116		
> ARCHITECTURE	118		
> DRINKING	120		
> FOOD	122		
> PARKS & GARDENS	124		
> SHOPPING	126		
> ACROBATICS	128		
> CYCLING	129		
> GALLERIES	130		
> GAY & LESBIAN	131		
> MARTIAL ARTS	132		
> MUSEUMS	133		
> TEMPLES	134		

Why is our travel information the best in the world? It's simple: our authors are passionate, dedicated travellers. They don't take freebies in exchange for positive coverage so you can be sure the advice you're given is impartial. They travel widely to all the popular spots, and off the beaten track. They don't research using just the internet or phone. They discover new places not included in any other guidebook. They personally visit thousands of hotels, restaurants, palaces, trails, galleries, temples and more. They speak with dozens of locals every day to make sure you get the kind of insider knowledge only a local could tell you. They take pride in getting all the details right, and in telling it how it is. Think you can do it? Find out how at lonelyplanet.com.



THIS IS BEIJING

Capital of the country everyone's talking about, Beijing is a dynamic clash of the ancient and the modern. Steeped in history it might be, but Beijing redefines and reinvents itself while other cities are content to rest on their laurels.

If the pace of change in Beijing leaves its almost 17 million residents breathless, then visitors to the city are frequently left open-mouthed by its contrasts. Stunning historical sights rub shoulders with cutting-edge architecture, while serene temples coexist with buzzing nightspots. And if that wasn't enough, Beijing is home to Asia's most exciting art scene, as well as upwards of 60,000 restaurants offering the very best of China's many cuisines.

More than anything, though, there's a confidence to Beijing now – a very real sense that this once conservative capital is enjoying the time of its life. Its inhabitants know that better than anyone. Beijingers have always believed they're living at the centre of the world; now, they really are. Always direct and never short of something to say and joke about, the locals are fiercely proud of their city and are no longer fazed or left tongue-tied by the increasing numbers of foreigners who have come to see what all the fuss is about.

Nevertheless, for all the new buildings, the improvements to infrastructure and the dramatic rise in living standards, Beijing remains a work in progress. Pollution is still an issue, no longer caused by heavy industry but by the 1000 new cars that take to the roads every day. And constant change brings its own stresses, as neighbourhoods are overhauled and once familiar landmarks disappear. Many people, too, have failed to prosper from the booming local economy.

But for all its inequalities, Beijing positively seethes with energy and optimism. There's nowhere else on the planet where you can see history being made on this scale, so grab the chance while you can.

Top left Peking Opera performance, Chaoyang Theatre (p64) **Top right** Artworks are on display indoors and out, in the Dashanzi Art District (p16) **Bottom** Every night is a good night at the restaurant strips by the lakes of Houhai (p88)